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GAERT

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NOTES—

Carl Bode, professor of American Literature at the University of Maryland, has published his poetry in British and American periodicals including the *Nation*, the *New Statesman*, and the *Saturday Review*. He has finished work on a volume, "Practical Magic."

Ruthven (Riven) Todd, was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1914, is an American citizen with a Spanish *residencia*. Knows something about William Blake, writes poems, about which he is talking here as a visitor. He has written novels, juveniles, books on tropical fish and trucks.

A.M. DELIVERY

Those nights at four in the morning
prowlers sprawled loose in the basement heater
like spiders unleashed from their springs
black gloves crawled up the chinks
strumming the vent like a harp near my bed.

the moon it flew into shrouds
the room was flogged with waves
that strangled on the walls.
I'd steady my neck and sit straight
as a chair until they were dead.

Then my ears would turn on God
remembering what mother had said,

"The milkman is out
delivering already
no one dare harm you."

Now my lover throws me out by the neck
like the sucked bottle and cat.
We tumble dry on the welcome mat.
Chalk white on the porch
I am still waiting for the milkman
to make his early round.

Judith Harris

BRUISE

for Holly

. . .tore violets from among pine
oak roots, I chained them round your hips

The red moon turned, you turned,
I saw the small veins purpling
beneath your ears. The mouths of flowers
gaped down along your legs

you berry
stained me I glow under your chin
in the moonlight like a buttercup

the phases of your throat

Bill Lloyd



STANLEY KUNITZ ON “THE SCIENCE OF THE NIGHT”

Stanley Kunitz, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet who is this year's Poetry Consultant at the Library of Congress, gave a reading of his poems in the "Writers Here & Now" series on November 19, 1974. After the reading, Adele Slaughter conducted the following interview with Mr. Kunitz.

AS: Mr. Kunitz, when you wrote "The Science of the Night," how many drafts did you write? Can you remember?

SK: Oh, that poem went on for a long time, through dozens and dozens of drafts. Maybe I could start by talking about how I usually work on a poem. I remember very well working on "The Science of the Night." I usually start in my notebook, writing with a pen, and more or less registering the first impulse that comes to me, a phrase or line. I started with that first phrase--"I touch you in the night"--the germ of the poem. But I didn't know where the poem was going. A poem won't go anywhere until it takes on a life of its own. At that point I turn to the typewriter and start pecking away until I hit a block; then I rip out the first sheet and start all over again. Meanwhile, I'm building up these rhythms; I'm saying them aloud at the same time, a sort of incantation, I'm trying to get enough momentum to jump over the next hurdle. At the end of a poem of this length, I may have a hundred sheets of paper on the floor . . .

AS: You mean, working yourself up to it?

SK: I always have to start at the beginning because I need that whole increment of rhythm and imagery in order to work up

enough speed. Otherwise, I'd never clear the hurdle. That's pretty much the way this poem was written. Actually, I have exhibited some of the sheets of this poem . . .

AS: You have?

SK: At the New York Public Library. They once did an exhibition of that kind, as if to prove that inspiration is such hard work. When I look at a manuscript of mine, I wonder how anyone could possibly decode it.

AS: The line in the poem that seems the turning point to me, is "Caught in the calcium snows of sleep." I was wondering if you had anything to say about that.

SK: What I remember is that when I wrote that line I felt pretty good about it. Actually, like so much of the poem, it comes out of information. I had read somewhere, in a paper on insomnia, that during deep sleep there is a precipitation of calcium in the brain. It's one of the little bits of knowledge that we store, and suddenly--it seemed just the right place!

AS: This poem is full of bits of knowledge. There's the shifting of the spectrum: "As through a glass that magnifies my loss / I see the lines of your spectrum shifting red."

SK: Oh, the red shift, yes. We need to learn as much as we possibly can about the world around us. Poetry is not only acts of perception, but also bits of information, concrete instances, embedded in the whole imagery. Any kind of information can be valuable to a poet. Poetry that is all mood or all feeling, empty of any kind of knowing, is much too vaporous and dissipates its energy. But the red shift: I don't

know how many readers understand what is going on there or would even be able to tell me what the red shift is. Can you?

AS: Rod Jellema told me what it was..going so fast that the spectrum shifts?

SK: That's right. (laughter) In a reading of the light from distant galaxies the shift of the spectrum to the longer waves--toward red--indicates that the celestial object is moving away from us. It is adduced as evidence that we live in an expanding universe, an infinitely expanding universe--which is a frightening thought. I'm pretty sure that this is the first poem to make use of the red shift, but that alone wouldn't make it any better. No nugget of information in a poem is worth anything unless it's incorporated into a structure of feeling and imagination.

AS: I was wondering about that line, "From hooded powers and abstract flight" . . .

SK: A tough question. Sometimes one goes back to a poem and asks, "What exactly did I have in mind?" Not everything is subject to clinical analysis. There are parts of a poem that are mysterious even to the writer. The *image* is clear to me; the hooded powers speak to me of daemonic adversaries, those secret enemies of the life that rebel against the person and attack his selfhood. I see them as Klan figures, agents of the destructive will. *Abstract flight* is another kind of image. Of course, it's tied in with the red shift; it's the movement away from the gravitational center of love. *Flight* is obviously associated with the idea of the expanding universe, and the worst kind of flight would be a coldly abstract one: into the reaches of the mind, the mind turning away from all feeling and becoming cold and abstract like the skies themselves. It's a kind of death of the heart that I'm talking about here, I would suppose. But I wouldn't bet my life on it . . . (laughter)

AS: Well, I think the best thing about the poem is the way it maintains the different levels--like "Bring me the mornings of the milky way/down to my threshold in your drowsy eyes; . . . You create two levels in the use of the milky way--both the stars and the milkman coming.

SK: Once the astrophysical imagery gets into the poem--you see it gets in very early--the first image has the night in it...

AS: Yes, and then that next image--"star-bemused" . . .

SK: I think that "star-bemused" is the phrase that led on to everything else. You have to trust your own imagination. You mustn't sit on it, and say, "Well, I don't want to write *that* kind of poem." If the poem decides to go that way, you have to ride along with it. You give it all the rein it wants until it's just about ready to run wild. From that point on you keep hauling it in and letting it go out again. A bad poet pulls back when he should be letting go, and vice-versa.

AS: Would you explain the tone you have adopted in your poetry and how has it transformed?

SK: The tone of voice I now seek in my poems approximates the tone of an intimate conversation between friends, a voice that doesn't strain too hard for nobility or resonance, but that makes a music out of its purity of diction and modulations of breath and pitch. The rhythms of my earlier poems were more self-evident, I suppose. Most people, unfortunately, haven't the slightest idea how to read a poem that doesn't go thumpety-thump. More ought to be done in the schools with reading poems aloud in order to capture their rhythms. The trouble is that teachers are among the worst offenders on this score. The young need to be given the opportunity, before their imaginations are crushed and their ears tuned out, to

hear the poets themselves--in the flesh, or in recordings I would much rather hear a poet read his own poetry, no matter how faulty, no matter how poor a performer he is, than to hear Richard Burton do it for him. I learn from a poet's reading about the sound in his head and the pulse of his feelings.

AS: I read "The Science of the Night" many times; it had many more dimensions when I heard you read it. The poem became so much more personal.

SK: Poetry in its origins is a highly personal medium That's why it has a capacity to enter the secret life of others

AS: This poem seems highly metaphysical. I was wondering whether you had been influenced by John Donne.

SK: Most of my early poems were influenced by the metaphysical poets, Donne in particular, Herbert; also Vaughan. Those three. Then, later I was under the spell of Gerard Manley Hopkins, who never ceases to astonish me. From your poetic ancestors you learn to test your possibilities.

One of the most important of the apprentice disciplines is in studying how the action of a poem develops. The imagination operates in bursts--it is an explosion--a sudden cluster of words. But how to achieve momentum? How to produce the sense of a continuing process? Each poet has a different syntax of the imagination, not necessarily one that he understands himself, or should even try to understand. It is best left to others to probe the ways things happen, the links between the clusters, the nature of the propelling energy. Once you have done that, you've really penetrated into the arcanum of a poet. It doesn't happen too often.

AS: But it's different for every poet?

SK: Inevitably.

AS: Some of the things you mentioned about momentum sound very familiar to me, which makes me feel good.

SK: Yeats is the poet who gave me the word "momentum". Each of us has his own way of working up steam. I know some poets for whom poems flow daily like water, but then they usually resemble water, not wine. My Russian friend Andrei Vozesensky--who doesn't belong in this category--writes all his poems in his head, walking around. Then he comes home and puts them down and that's the end. He never touches them after that. Wallace Stevens used to compose his poems in his head on his way to the insurance office; he would walk to the office every morning in Hartford and improvise lines en route. On his arrival at the office he would dictate them to his secretary--that's how some of the best poems in the language got to be written--incredible! There are some poets who consider it heresy to touch a typewriter. But I love the feeling a typewriter gives me, because I can see my lines on the page in clean typography. My handwritten manuscript is such a mess! That wonderful look of a poem after you've finally licked it into shape and transposed it onto the typewritten page! It's a joyful experience, a beautiful moment. That's what one fights for all the way through the morass.

AS: I guess that's why most people write--to see that

SK: But meanwhile you've been swamped by all that crud on the page, and you've doubted you would ever escape into the clearing.

AS: Do you think your poems are totally finished before you get to the typewriter?

SK: By no means. A poem never forgives you for giving up too soon.

THE SCIENCE OF THE NIGHT

I touch you in the night, whose gift was you,
My careless sprawler,
And I touch you cold, unstirring, star-bemused,
That are become the land of your self-strangeness.
What long seduction of the bone has led you
Down the imploring roads I cannot take
Into the arms of ghosts I never knew,
Leaving my manhood on a rumpled field
To guard you where you lie so deep
In absent-mindedness,
Caught in the calcium snows of sleep?

And even should I track you to your birth
Through all the cities of your mortal trial,
As in my jealous thought I try to do,
You would escape me--from the brink of earth
Take off to where the lawless auroras run,
You with your wild and metaphysic heart.
My touch is on you, who are light-years gone.
We are not souls but systems, and we move
In clouds of our unknowing
like great nebulae.
Our very motives swirl and have their start
With father lion and with mother crab.

Dreamer, my own lost rib,
Whose planetary dust is blowing
Past archipelagoes of myth and light,
What far Magellans are you mistress of
To whom you speed the pleasure of your art?
As through a glass that magnifies my loss
I see the lines of your spectrum shifting red,
The universe expanding, thinning out,
Our worlds flying, oh flying, fast apart.

From hooded powers and from abstract flight
I summon you, your person and your pride.
Fall to me now from outer space,
Still fastened desperately to my side;
Through gulfs of streaming air
Bring me the mornings of the milky ways
Down to my threshold in your drowsy eyes;
And by the virtue of your honeyed word
Restore the liquid language of the moon,
That in gold mines of secrecy you delve.
Awake!

My whirling hands stay at the noon,
Each cell within my body holds a heart
And all my hearts in unison strike twelve.

Stanley Kunitz

We are not stars
but gas forms, and
In clouds of being, like great nebulae
One unknowing

Stanley Kubrick

I touch you in the night; you do not stir,
My careless sprawler, you who slip away
Down the erotic roads I cannot go
Into the arms of ghosts I never knew,
Leaving me here upon this rumpled field
To contemplate you absent-minded, lost,
And cold under the calcium snows of sleep.

I touch you in the night; you do not stir,
whose brightness slips away
My careless sprawler, ~~you who~~ slip away
Down the erotic roads I cannot go
Into the arms of ghosts I never knew;
Leaving my manhood on a rumpled field
To guard you who lie absent-minded, cold,
Entranced under the calcium snows of sleep.

Changed!
I touch you in the night; you do not stir,
My careless sprawler, whose brightness slips (away) ^{bright-edged is}
Down the erotic roads I cannot go
Into the arms of ghosts I never knew;
Leaving my manhood on a rumpled field
To guard you as you lie so absent-minded
And entrailed under the calcium snows of sleep.

Changed!
lying brightness
and into your form
Spectral

so already you spread,
whose gift is you
In absent-mindedness So absent-minded and enthralled
in you lie so deep
Under the calcium snows of sleep

THE GEESE FLY HIGH

There is a whistling
As the wind stampedes
Through the trees.

Listen. Look.

Trees root to the sky,
Elephants whistle,
The geese fly high.

Patrick McGrath

MORNING

Something cool like milk
For the land that sings I want, I want;

That shines like honey
In the morning
When the land burns with hunger
As the night leaves like sleep;

Something the waves bring in
Like a dutch fire brigade,
Haarlem to Helder to van Harlinger;

That they set down in bottles
All along the beach
In the morning
When the land drinks in sunlight.

Patrick McGrath



NATIVITY

Old women
fire clay ovens.
There will be bread.

Six men
work on the church
lifting the cross.
The day is heat.

Pueblo.
Lower your head
through the many eyes
that burn into flesh
and beyond.

White sun.
There are no shadows.
In the center of dust
a bridge
crosses brief water.

A child stares
into my face.
She seeks my eyes.
Guilty, I smile.

Bread.
The smell
comes from stone.

Linda Hogan

A WORKINGMAN THINKS OF WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

beside
the railroad tracks

mounds
of salt

rise against gray
sky

grit
for the winter roads

looking
out from the warehouse

October flares

Charles L. Belbin

Three Separate Nights After I Realized My Aunt Is Dying

1

Fog.
Old men wander
along the sliprails
of America,
praying for the
grayness to
rise.

2

An owl dances
with a rat in
the road.
Dust rises under
the ludicrous elms.

3

A dog skitters away
into the darkness,
Carrying a bone in
its mouth.
We eye each other
warily.

David Hickman

I have seen the shiverer
suckle the lip blue
morning from a
collapsible
cup
and Rodin's Torso in
stained light
—the gouged middle
of a man
and I have known
the beasts that eat the
face of the moon.
They come nightly.

When I stand in the
yellow air and
level-eye those beasts,
this is my refrain:

Each new moon is a child
Each child is an artist
Rodin
Rodin.

David Hickman



SNOW STORY

"The temperature is dropping and it might snow tonight," he said. "I hope I don't have difficulty getting the car out. Johnson gave me another assignment today and is pleased with that report I finished yesterday. It is especially important that I not be late tomorrow morning."

"Dinner is ready."

"I'm almost never late. The last time I was late from work was during the heavy snow last winter; the ice was frozen on the windows an inch thick and it took half an hour to get it off. When I finally got in Johnson said, 'Well you haven't been late in five years, have you Harry?' and I said--"

"And you said, 'No, Mr. Johnson, I've always been dependable.' Dinner is ready. Come and sit down."

"And I said, 'No, Mr. Johnson, I've always been dependable.' There's nothing better," he said seating himself at the table, "than coming home to a warm house and my slippers."

They ate in silence for several minutes and then the woman said, "The Congers are moving. They need more room because of the baby, and they want to live somewhere new."

The man did not say anything and when he finished eating he pushed his plate away and lit a cigarette. There were sounds of wet pavement coming up from the street.

"It's snowing."

"Now that they have the baby they're going to take him with them when they go skiing in January. It's so wonderful to go some place new, see new people, hear different sounds. When you're around the same people all the time you know what they're going to say before they say it. Their faces all look alike and you lump them together and after a while they don't seem like individuals in their own right any more."

"When I was a kid we always lived in places where there was lots of snow; our family had sleds and skis. When it was my job to feed the chickens and get the eggs, I was the first person to make a footprint in the back yard and I made a game of going to the coop and back. I always put one foot in front of the other so it would look like a person with only one leg had been hopping around. I put my feet in the same holes going back, too, so I wouldn't disturb any more of the surface than I had to."

He got up from the table in the "el" and stood in front of the living room window. The woman started taking the dirty dishes into the kitchen.

"I hope it doesn't snow too much; I have a new assignment and I can't be late for work." He stood solidly with his feet apart, his chin tucked under a little as if he were recoiling from a draft. His left shoulder was lower than his right and his straight dark hair was untidy. The end of his cigarette brightened suddenly as he drew on it. The woman finished clearing the table and stood beside her husband at the window. She was much shorter than he in their reflection in the glass; she came barely to his shoulder. She stood confidently on one foot, the other balanced hesitantly on the toe as if she were going to return to the kitchen at any moment. She was not watching the snow as he was; she was watching her husband, and the glass caught the movement of her bright dark eyes as she began to speak.

"The Congers' bird died during the cold snap last week."

"I didn't know they had a bird."

"It was a hurt wild one that they kept in a cage. Andrew put

the bird on the porch for some air and forgot to bring it in before he went to work. They were going to let it go when it could fly, but when he came home it was dark and stiff in the bottom of the cage and there was frost on its wings."

The snow was coming down in light, dry flakes and there was already a covering on the ground. The woman's reflection faded into the snow and she imagined that she was outside and that the glass was between her and her husband. The snow under her feet sparkled like powdered glass and the flakes that landed on her skin did not melt but felt warm, and the warmth enveloped her in a protective bubble in which she lived a life of excitement and variety. She was skiing, she was inspecting a house she had noticed one day when she was pushing the baby, she was buying furniture, she was dressing for a party. The vision began to fade and she turned to her husband.

"If the baby had lived she would have been ten next month. Maybe we would go away like the Congers. I don't feel that I've ever had anything that's mine; sometimes I make up whole worlds in my mind, and they're always busy and happy --then I feel as if I'm worth something, as if I'm here for a purpose."

The man stood in front of the window watching the snow until he put out his cigarette. "It's coming down harder now; maybe I'd better put a tarp over the car," he said, but continued to stand in front of the window until he lit another cigarette. His wife did not speak and she felt herself being drawn to her reflection in the glass. She had a tarp with her, folded small and tucked under her arm, and she saw herself walking slowly and ceremoniously down imaginary steps which led from the window sill to the driveway. In the snow she again felt a confidence in her identity which she never felt in the house, and she carefully and meticulously brushed the snow from the car before unwrapping and spreading the cover. As the tarp slid into place she saw herself covering her doll when she was a little girl, her puppy which took the place of her dolls when she was a little older, and then her baby. In her dream she cautioned herself not to think too much on this for she knew that any thought of the baby always inhibited her imagination. Her husband's voice, however, brought her to attention.

"Should I put the tarp on the car? I'm afraid of being late tomorrow." He drew on his cigarette, and she did not answer, but instead crossed the room and sat on the couch.

"I like the snow," he said as if it surprised him. "I used to walk through the snow to catch the school bus in the morning."

"And you used to walk through the snow to feed the chickens and get the eggs. You played a game with yourself because the snow was fresh and clean and you didn't want to make the first holes in the surface. You always put one foot ahead of the other so it looked like someone with only one leg had been walking across the yard."

"I like the snow because it is all the same and has no surprises."

"But it is hard to drive in. Remember last winter it took you a long time to scrape off the ice and you were late for work?"

"And Mr. Johnson said, 'Well you haven't been late in five years, have you Harry? --"

"And you said, 'No Mr. Johnson, I've always been dependable.'"

They were silent for several minutes as he finished his cigarette and began another. He saw the room reflected behind him in the glass and congratulated himself on his powers of perception in noticing that the snow was a purer

white than the walls of the room. There were pictures on the walls, but not too many, he thought; he liked some empty space between them. His wife was sitting on the couch behind him, and the whites of her eyes were reflected in the glass as she idly scanned his back. The glass made her face the same greyish-white as the walls, and her brown eyes and hair were just vague dark splotches. The lamp hanging from the ceiling was too bright, he thought; it was difficult to see into the night when you had such a bright light behind you. He studied his reflection and decided he could see why Mr. Johnson depended on him: he presented a dignified appearance without seeming snobbish, and the set of his shoulders communicated a temperament that was not to be trifled with, but was nevertheless given to frequent outbursts of boyish enthusiasm. All in all he was pleased with the personality he radiated for all his neighbors to see, and he remained in front of the window as he lit another cigarette.

The woman was fatigued by her work around the house during the day, but was restless and anxious to escape to her world of fantasy. From her seat on the couch she could see the living room and part of the dining room in the glass. She had gotten the dining room set at a bargain because the table top was scratched and she had to keep it covered with a table cloth all the time. The curtains were a source of amusement for her because they had been the result of an impulsive shopping spree; the color did not match anything else in the house and the wild pattern was at odds with the somber pictures and furniture. She had wanted to paint the living and dining rooms a bright color for a long time, but her husband would not agree to anything unconventional. She wanted to hang prints of famous paintings in place of his solemn brown mountains and trees, but it seemed pointless to her to put energy into framing when he would not allow her to paint. The couch and chair in the living room had been wedding presents from her parents and were of good quality, but needed to be re-upholstered. The room was homey, she thought, was well-lit and a good room for reading, but it lacked charm. She stood up and went to the thermostat on the wall.

"Does it seem hot in here to you?"

"Maybe a little."

"When I was small," she said adjusting the indicator, "we lived in a house that was extremely hard to heat and we had to keep the upstairs closed off to save fuel. In the morning and evening we dressed and undressed in front of the stove. I think being warm means more to me than just being comfortable. It's like somebody being friendly to me; I feel secure. I can't take somebody being cold toward me; it makes me feel empty, like I haven't had enough to eat. I know people react differently to different treatment at different times; I don't always respond the same when somebody's unfriendly to me. I guess it depends on what's happened to me that day, the time of month, or the weather."

She stopped speaking and there was silence. She waited for her husband to say something and then she said, "It's more comfortable in here now, isn't it?" and he said it was. She sat down on the couch again, and as she sat looking at her husband with his lopsided shoulders, ridiculous prize-fighter's stance and uncombed hair, she decided to exercise her powers of removal on him, and within seconds had placed him outside the window, in the snow.

Once outside, he too descended the steps to where the car was parked, and began clearing off the inch of snow that had collected since early evening. She placed a tarp under his arm, and when the surface of the car was clean, he covered the car as she had done. She could not think of a pretext for

keeping him out longer, so he returned quickly. He went to another part of the house for a short time and then returned to the window and lit a new cigarette. A group of laughing young people passed under the window.

"How children love the snow," said the woman.

"Yes they do. So do I, and I've always been sorry that you don't like it."

There was a short silence and the woman said, "The baby would have loved playing in the snow."

"When I was little I used to play a game--"

"I've always wondered who was really to blame that she died."

"I tried to make a straight line with my feet so I wouldn't ruin the surface of the snow."

"The doctor said it was one of those mysterious infant deaths that nobody knows anything about. Do you remember that I had gone to the store when it was snowing and you didn't come because you had a cold and I didn't want to take the baby into the wind?"

"I stayed in bed most of the day, but I got up several times to check on her."

"But when I came back you were sitting in the living room and I went into the bedroom. I thought she was asleep."

"I didn't do it."

There were snow plows on the street in front of the house. The man thought, "I really ought to cover the car or I'll be late tomorrow morning," but he remembered the cold and the inconvenience of having to put on his coat and gloves and he pretended for a moment that he had already gone out, that his wet coat was hung above the bathtub, and that he was secure in knowing that he would be early to work. Tomorrow morning the snow will have stopped, he thought, and pictured himself picking his way through the snow to the car, placing one foot directly in front of the other so as not to be the first person to mar the surface. He would see his neighbors opening their drapes to watch the man who really knew how to handle the snow. "What a neat yard he has," they would exclaim. "And look how cleverly he covers his car so he does not make himself late in the morning!" The man permitted himself a small self-indulgent smile between puffs on his cigarette, and noticed in the glass that his teeth were fully as bright as the soft, wispy flakes that were falling on the other side of the window. The end of his cigarette glared hotly for a moment and then he put it out and turned to his wife who was staring absently, and somewhat foolishly, it seemed to him, at a blank space on the wall.

"It's about time to go to bed, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes, but hadn't you better cover the car so you aren't late in the morning?"

"It's more important that I have plenty of rest."

She hesitated and then said, "I'll do it."

"Make sure you get all the snow off or it'll freeze under the tarp and the ice will be worse."

It did not seem nearly as cold as had been forecast. The flakes brushing her cheeks were almost warm, and the snow under her feet was a bright welcoming carpet. The night was friendly and the breeze was soft, and a protective hand descended and gently surrounded her. She looked up at the house from the yard, at the bright light hanging from the ceiling, and the picture over the couch. Her husband did not come to the window. Then she turned and looked down the street into the night. The street she lived on ran into a larger street, and it was on this larger street that she would be able to find a ride that would take her as far away as she wanted to go.

The Appendix

The appendix is the strangest of women:
She doesn't do anything.
She just sits around waiting for someone to take her out
To dinner or the movies or some such place.

But that doesn't happen too easily:
She usually has to throw a temper tantrum or pretend to
be sick in order to get attention
One of her favorite tricks is threatening to hold her
breath till she bursts.
This usually works.
If she still doesn't get asked out, though, she can get
very violent.
Perhaps even commit murder.
Some of the more hostile appendixes have to be locked
away where they won't hurt anyone or cause any
trouble.
--Way out in the backs of books, for example.
--They're quite harmless there.

Marc A. Jaffe

Lovers in agreement

In the New York subway, where the magic-marker
people still remain invisible like true artists,
we sit with our mittens just touching. the slow
down for the station, the speedup and up and noise
of the tons of metal, the slowdown, station. the
pattern is so easy to discern.

It makes lover talk easy. you know, if we
talk between the stations the chicano kids
across the aisle, greasy heads with the leather,
they can't hear. sometimes we will talk
about the driver man. no one has ever seen him,
hiding in that box in train number one. wonder
what he packs for lunch every day.

Metal on metal is so damn loud. sometimes
when you cup those furry mittens to my ear
and whisper I get every other word. the
train shakes my body, shakes the head to
a nod. lovers in agreement.

Elijah Mirochnik

NOVEMBER

All the hands,
on the big ones,
(not the whisperers)
the tall ones,
that clapped the wind-
are gone.

The hands that held shade
with rustle and restless
are broken and brown
on the ground.

My friends dead
in leaving too,
I walk on the path
back and forth,
until—
I crack all the knuckles.

Francis Taylor



Displacement

 kids and lambs
 over the heat grate
 in the floor
 brought in
 from the Midwestern
 night cold
 I told you
 I never heard
 such a strange thing
 and you explained
 how you had
 never seen
 a Jew
 until you
 left home
 much less
 talked
 to one

Karen L. Alenier

Cathy

**Your father wrote me.
In New York City his words came wondering
what made you insane.**

We were happy parakeets
[or so our fathers thought].
I had my poems, my pets, you had Martha Graham.
We served drinks to pay the rent,
cocktails to business men; dark suited
penguins, flashy woodpeckers with cigars, leaving tips,
discussing our bodies at the bar (our tits)
as if they were Dow Jones Averages.
We quit. We joked about those old birds of men,
but a nest of bills, a mailbox full
of hungry-mouthed envelopes sent us back to work.
Back and forth, two clay pigeons
passing out drinks like medicine, counting change;
those silver bullets filled our pockets.
Cathy, what can I write your father?
Dear Sir, dear daddy,
bright, shiny quarters killed your daughter.
The smooth olive of your ballerina
drowned in a martini...
where teeth are moons,
where ice cubes float like swans across the water.

Diana Vance

the day the electric company threw
the switch i awoke earlier; when the
finance company clamored, i walked;
the day the telephone denied me a
dial tone i undertook meditation; when
the school demanded tuition, i denied
knowledge..when she left me i turned
inward and prayed.....
i recite to remember who i am

sometimes i forget and fuck with
this phantom who floats in the center of
my head singing mamma's on the bottom
pappa's on the top cept pappa got the
bottom and mamma got the top baby's in
the middle going flippity flop....

Joe Brennan

PEA SOUP

City air stagnates
people don't move
streets trail off in
haze
a nation turns to
its weathermen
for leadership
and
de word

Weather is pushing
its hand on us:

Three days later high pressure
rips smog like a leather
purse and we breathe:

move on

Wonder if we
MAKE IT HAPPEN

We pick our courses
by trailing strings
thru doors down streets
until we enter the next stagnation
feeling for
the door

doing errands

passing appliance stores

searching the screens for
weathermen.

Bill Griffiths

FLY CITY BIRD

1.
I learned to run on toes,
so not to hit a crack.
When feet and asphalt no longer met,
hands and knees would tear,
looking like sides of beef
my father brought home
from 14th street.

2.
In late afternoon
through shadows from venetian blinds,
cat on fire escape
stalking bird.
Shadows moved him closer to prey.
Measured moves by paws.

3.
I learned from cat
to move as shadows.
Catch a paw.
Lose a feather.
Leap.

Jerry David

MY BONES

1.
The brittle bones which hold me
shake.
Inside my knee they scrape like chalk on blackboard.
Slowly they crumble.
They seem like the bones of some ancient warrior,
the knowledge of an ancient battle still inside.
‘It’s the minuscus cartilage.
It’s got to come out.’

2.
In the stillness at Seafarm,
the heads of cows seem anchored into the ground.
I run
My knee jumps out from me
and I fall.
Looking from the ground;
if those cows moved,
each leg would surely take up the earth.

Jerry David

KISSING INSANE

There is this insane asylum
with two hours every night
when the doctors
and guards
sleep.
This is when
DERANGED Chester sneaks
from his room
with a secret jar of honey.
MOONSTRUCK Cynthia wakes
and meets him
below the barbed wire
outside.
The stars are brightest then
as Chester opens the honey jar
and fills his mouth
till his cheeks puff.
Cynthia dips her fingers in
and spreads on her lips
sweet dripping gold,
and both of them come
out of their trance.

Ken Goodman

ONE FOR ALLAN

Allan's scarf
trails red plaid
down the back of the slatted chair
where it has been two days.

I come in dark.
Nothing
but the red ash of his cigarette
trailing the night
like a light on a plane
I could believe was a flying saucer.
I lay easily, on the strip of mattress beside him.

I ask how I stand.
Gravity
is not the key.
We joke as lovers.
There is time left for landing, but
everything flows

Into red
mornings. Into sleep.

Nanci Neff



2

6/12



2
6/12

Excerpt From PILLOW BOOK

a small light in motion
and its motion motion itself
 a pulse gleaned, notated
 night's dissolve
 grainy image of coastline
 mist clusters, dissolve
 filtered glare
 glossy mounds of sea
 pitch settles, asserts, flap
 the sea light
 burns in the glass
 flickering sea shingle
 small light going.
in the low sling of the plain, cossack;
 crouching staccato
 orchestrated charge
 flesh to sudden liquid
 tall grass legato as the sea
 wood fused to stone, "black bough"
 the mere incident of music
stone, stone, glass, flower expired at the rim
stone, extend, melody trickles to rapid pizzicato
stone, extend, stone, bowl of silent water
rim and drop and drop drop
 in one raised vein
a shadow before the plain;
 in this there can be nothing delicate,
 sinew staggered about bone,
 flexed into order.
Michelangelo at times overarticulated his forms, *ecorches*
 muscles strained to the task of moving the air
 mass bursting mass
 Raphael's drapery
Raphael's figures with fabrics grace
 where the line ceases
 and form blends form blooms

in a cafe cubes of mango
fall at toothpick point
in the hands of Polonius' murderer
as a reaper appearing before Rensei, Atsumori
 solid and transparent
 the wickless flame
 the spirit blown through many sleeps
 "to know, that is to know the rites"
 in the observer the observed
Euclid warped around the bulge of planets

light bent toward beauty
to relate the relatable
and separate the separable
to expand ignorance beyond formula
so no grip exist on wisdom
that wisdom be and knowledge be
cloudbank infused with light
harmony between elements
the rainbow ceasing at the base of the galaxy
the word hovers in flux
cannot succeed the moment
the objectives are heuristic
a plunge until the darkness is so unnatural
there is no value is not seeing
whenever there is mention of mystery
movement of wine in the glass
swirled out of its nature
eyes blurred by depth and downward coiling motion
the mystery indeed somewhere in the blood.
a thousand waves on one water
zenith, nadir
one water immediate with a thousand white caps
strikes a thousand depths
a perpetual complex of desires;
in their motion
the still point visible,
height thru depth
the field lit about in white foam
dawning, dimming
composition as it renders
shape arches
into decomposition
galaxies fetal smoke
pool about the flower, Narcissus
bent to negate the tusk of the boar
solved by the same equation
solved at each infinite point by the same equation
each passageway yielded at the root
each escape under the flat leaf
opens for each refugees dream
who turns back at the breeze
to estimate the change
and in turning back is scattered briefly.
resolved at each infinite point.
the crocus thwart the leaves with their color
the sunlight wanders below the water
no end to mingling,
the negative of being
the bulk of four brown notebooks
the thin leaves of Sung in partial shadow

Carlo Parcelli

To James Dickey
[with apologies]

I smell the poems
of a woodsman
and fighter
who knows
from each hair the
scent of the fox
and the death
of night flying.

Like hounds
who whiff the
trail into woods,
through the hollows
of logs, over
and back through
streams to catch
the scent of
the burrow,
and bark
in the core
of each cell,

your words
leap on the page
with a beat of
the tail and
a nose to
the earth.

You know the utmost
power of the moon
like you know
the fierce turn
of engine props
painted black and
nights over water,
though long since
having ripped the
tiger from your
leather breast.

I follow your scent
to water and
like one who would
drown near the shore
of your river,
feel for the furious
kick of your feet.

Last night
coming home
from the market,
I hid the
melon in
a brown paper bag,
and told them
I had stolen
one of Rachel's
tits.

Patric Pepper

Annette Curtis

MAKING CHANGE

It was nine o'clock before they decided on a hotel off the highway near the sea. They had been on the road all day avoiding each other by gazing concentratedly at the desolate landscape of barren hills and flat weedy beaches. They faced each other at dinner for the first time in hours and agreed all around that they wanted to get out of Spain as fast as possible. They grew cordial with wine and shared hostility. Doc was the only one who had a sympathy for its invisible history. "I want to come back here and spend a lot of time. You can't see Spain in three days driving. I might even get in some dental work." Beata reminded him of Paris. "We weren't there three days either and we were lucky to get out of the Hotel Apollo before the fourth floor fell into the lobby. It was a bomb site." They had gotten on each other's nerves. Four in a VW was as uncomfortable as a telephone booth.

Stephie broke into tears in the bathroom. "I couldn't stand to be married to Martin. He's ruined our vacation." Beata stared at her. She was daily becoming more abstract with regard to the topic of Martin. He had been sitting for more than a week with his hands rubbing between his knees with frustration. He was a fractious child, glowering but obedient. Doc wouldn't let him drive because it was a new car and he was afraid that Martin in a pique would drive them off the road. Martin overslept. Once on schedule Doc hated delay more than discomfort. She was glad when Martin slept in. She had time to herself, ordering coffee, propped up on pillows, working on her notebooks, smoking delicately. She pretended Martin was a lingering disease, terminal, making her frail, consumptive and forgiveable. She delighted in fantasies that penetrated a future beyond romantic agony, a houseboat on a canal, coal stoves, rosy children and the smell of salt water. Martin was a man sleeping in a stillborn childhood. With him time stood still, but the things of life fluttered impressively around them with the precision of roundness, flatness, greenness. Sunlight unrolled in their path like a deep carpet. It blinded her. They had gone over the falls on this trip. They couldn't get through to each other with Doc and Stephie in the middle. Martin would whimper with tears in his eyes, "I chose you but you didn't choose me." She was alarmed more than she could tell Stephie. She felt mute. Martin was notorious for his infidelities. She couldn't explain that his sudden uxoriousness, his raving dependence was more terrifying to her than his bad temper was to Stephie.

She recalled their last stop before Madrid, a little town north of Biarritz called Chambre d'Amour. Everyone sulked. She was determined to enjoy herself, the ruffled curtains blowing through the open windows, the white air. She

vaguely suspected that as a consequence of being disappointed in love, pleasure was her chief consolation. She could easily become ecstatic over trivial things like a fresh flower or good coffee. She had kissed the ground when they crossed the border into France, remembering Genet's fascination with borders and thresholds. She had an affinity with France. It was a homecoming. She felt a maternal regret for Martin. She defended him, the perfect thief, a dazzling convict. His crimes were minor infractions of the law, childish passions, love of woman. She had become his victim, fretting about the mystery between her legs, supposing that their sexual transaction was magic, the bed the cradle of life. A fine gulling. One doesn't surrender such faith without another miracle or an auto-da-fe.

Tonight their room was absolutely simple. The sheets were crisp. There was yet some plaster unswept in the corners of the tiled bathroom. It was so new. By the time Beata got out of the shower Martin was asleep. Too soon. She wanted to forgive him. Making love was part of her ritual forgiveness. His anger poisoned every waking minute. He lived in an aura of ill humor. He was clumsy with repairs. Mechanically he didn't deal well with space. It presented obstacles to him. Forms merely got in his way. He must be living in a platonic circus, she thought.

The trip was the wrong decision. They had planned it to heal him. Then they were too close to Doc and Stephie. Who were obstacles. They wouldn't yield their time or space as she was taught to do. They possessed their world with watches and barometers and shoe trees. Martin swamped them with his practiced hate. We should always travel by ourselves. "He should always travel by himself," she corrected in a mutter. For the first time it was clear she wanted to get out. "Get out of the car, get out of Spain, get out of this marriage." So far she felt like a soldier in battle calculating survival one day at a time.

She was biding time, waiting for Cannes. To her it meant a clinic, a hospital. Grayson was there and he would know what to do with Martin. She could leave him there possibly. Grayson's wife was dying of cancer and he would have the secrets, the touch. He would know the right things to say to sick people, the proper herbs and simples, the miraculous water. Martin wouldn't carry money or passport. He smoked and coughed nervously and incessantly. He hung on her like a child. Grayson liked Martin because he was handsome and young and hard-edged. To an older man he was the personification of the second chances.

She left a light on in the bathroom because for the first time

she was afraid to sleep in a strange place. Martin's back was turned, he seemed empty. Almost everything fit at right angles, the walls, the corners of the bed, the crucifix. The light burned absolute shadows into the white room. She fell asleep to get out of the room. There were no answers in a place so transcendently simply and new, unadorned with the slightest flaw, a chink in the plaster, heel marks on the floor, or dust on the sill. She dreamed for several hours, perhaps, but it was a sudden and incontrovertible nightmare which roused her out of a drugged half-consciousness. She was gagging. An enormous fatigue in her mouth stuttered like words, like tears, like suffocation arching from the back of her throat. Her terror was perfected by the room. It contained it. There was someone else with them. She knew it. Her shoulder blades twitched like antennae wherever she turned it was always behind her. Her dream printed like a snapshot on the last image, the only part of it she could remember.

Two women lay in the bed. One was grossly fat, the other was emaciated. They made love to one another it seemed. And one became the other. They passed back and forth between beings, gliding into the other body, breasts and thigh, hands and face. They talked all the while. She despised them, pudgy and obscene, sallow and waspish. She couldn't remember what they were talking about. She didn't want to be like them and dreaded to think she was one of them or their balance struck, deformed, wrenched out of focus. She shrank from some appalling accusation in her dream. For all her hysteria, Martin lay sound asleep and couldn't be wakened. She wanted him to search the room. She was convinced they were being watched, an alien guardian, omniscient and terrible. Finally, she got up and checked the shower and the shadows behind the door.

She thought for the first time that she had cracked apart like a fresh egg. She was giving birth and Martin wouldn't help, wake up and save her, make her understand. He would tell her it was strictly a problem of the imagination. He would make it all her own fault. When the horror of the nightmare had vanished she would never be what she had been. "Who will recognize me." Martin knew the real shape of her breasts, knew what she smelled like asleep, knew that she had several different voices. With anyone else she would have to begin all over with an inventory of things to offer. In the event of a failure, a disappointment, she could give cause. "Well it all started here . . ."

"How much do you have to make up for?" His presence gnawed like a newly stitched wound in her side, plucking at her nerves. She wanted to go on alone. He would always be a rider. She would let Grayson decide what to do with him. They had pulled knives on each other. Let them play with foils. She would surrender to that new creature only if it were a good job, a well-cut diamond, a flawless excision of her old body and all of its flab and clabber attachment. She preferred being blown out of the face of the earth like Mt. Rushmore to being carved out of Martin's rib. The valium began to work. She started to float, arms outstretched, head thrown back, into the stream, drifting straight for her own country.

* * *

Slowly that summer Beata had assumed another character. Violet had improved her with a new conscience, a sense of the limits of the world's debt to its feeling creatures, the futility of owing where there is no demand, the dissolution of an old contract with nature or fellow man. In writing about Violet she had a mirror image, a vicarious way of solving her dilemma which was to proceed to some unspecified goal or retreat into an unhistoric past. She had no past with definite

actions that had consequences, gifts one would display on the mantelpiece, a shingle to put out, poems published as their last articulation. It was really for Violet's past she had wanted to come to France. To decipher her cult of love, to make her credible to liberated women, to boil all the facts down to a judgment. She didn't want to make her out to be a failure.

The birds were singing. The fields were speckled with flowers. The wind was blowing from the south. Seven lined notebooks were stacked on her lap. She ruffled through her clipboard balancing a cup of coffee on the padded arm of the chair. She planned to do a translation of these confessions, partly mystical, partly narrative, in such an order that they composed a portrait of a woman who had an emotional poise, a harmony to the discordance of events in her life. She died pregnant and abandoned. A suicide at twenty-three created by Flaubert. Vi was a pianist who touched the world with her fingers like a keyboard. She guessed what the man was like from letters patched together by Violet's friends. He had been her physician. She mentioned shots. Perhaps she was diabetic. She visualized a young man, nervous and precise, carefully groomed, hair brushed flat against his head, his neck clean shaven. Violet had been an incongruity of metaphors. She rushed her speech. A dressmaker made her clothes, which were always severe, tailored for an older woman. He had refused to take any responsibility for her. In 1960 her notebooks would have been in the tradition of Rimbaud or Simone Weil. In 1970, they were testaments of the defeat of a nonconformist who experimented with people, who tested her own nerve, and was swallowed up in the excesses of her own contrivances. The least Beata could do was sacrifice her nakedness, her instincts, her exploitation of God.

Tomorrow they would be in Cannes. The night had been gothic. Heat lightning illuminated the lashing trees. Shutters clattered. The curtains swung from the ceiling. Blowing leaves skipped over the bare floors. Words floated up from the page, "*C'est pas ici le lieu des paroles inutiles. Je dirai ce que doit être dit.*" She was reading a passage about the tree of life, a poem in the form of a surreal genealogy. A tree was composed of people, draped with human fruit. A Dantean sketch of human life reincarnated in other forms, the Virgilian image of a tree weeping clots of blood when Aeneas picked a branch. Polydorus had been murdered by the King of Thrace. The pen of the immortals, the Golden Bough, dripped blood on the parchment. The bridegroom ravished the bride. She shivered. It could have been predicted that Violet with the flaming heart would be denied, would be taken out of the oven like dinner. A perfect subject for the madonna, luminous blonde and pale, she had often posed for such canvases, but they always saw her as the Maiden, without child, pensive and unawakened, eyes cast down, arms folded across her belly to illustrate her emptiness. They could never paint her hands, her flashing facile hands. They were too quick, they escaped the eye. Really they were too small for a pianist. Someone else's hands were added at the last minute. The artist's wife, a friend, the flower vendor at the market. Beata was beginning to think that her anonymous chastity was a form of ignorance. She could figure out the causes but she didn't understand why they necessarily led to tragic effects. The solutions of the moral arithmetic she had sketched out all pointed to Violet's soul¹ and not to her situation. She could have disappeared into an enclave of artists, a society of infidels. She could have been defiant. Beata thought about her own marriage which had become a method of disguise. She now wore other people like clothing and she was beginning to stagger. She had added herself up in obsessive people. It seemed overwhelmingly important to know their

motives and their weaknesses.

Beata found herself walking behind Martin, not speaking to interrupt him. One day they would be turned inside out against each other like a glove. When they had penetrated each other they would love, hear each others Adamic language, and be peaceful. Martin's eyes fluttered in his sleep. His mouth moved softly. Beata kissed him on his bare shoulder. He sighed. She thought that today would be his good day. On her wedding day she had received from Violet's mother what appeared to be an invitation but in customary French decorum was a single card edged in black announcing Violet's death. No explanations added. The odor of lilacs had permeated the house, unctuous and heavy it hung in the air. Her reaction was a kind of incredible sweetness, an unaccountable beatitude. From that day her response to ceremonies was askew. She laughed at funerals and cried at weddings. Any form of tragedy kindled her to a strange sensuous glow. She was beautiful. She rose. Her flesh became buoyant. Her skin glowed pink with fever. Her life was an album of rogues, leaves she turned daily on the different faces of evil, suicides, murderers, addicts, alcoholics, fags, and the poor who were always with you, convicts, the loveless, and soon the dying. She slid the paper under the clip and leaned on her elbows out the window sniffing the morning air.

Their room was in a rambling wooden farm house converted into an inn. One wing was closed off. The rooms were sparsely furnished. The garden was overgrown and wild. Doc and Stephie were at the other end of the hall. "Remember I'm a dentist, not a shrink, Bea. If you want to leave him and go with us, you're welcome. We don't know how you can stand him. Whether or not he's sick, he's definitely mean." She felt she would be trashing him. Her defense had always been that she really liked him because he was interesting. He told her stories. They sometimes lay awake all night. He talked and she listened. He'd been a thief. Nearly sent up for armed robbery, but he was a juvenile and the judge let him join the marines. He was a ghetto kid with a quick mind, the strangest blend of elegance and craft. She was fascinated enough to want to see how he turned out. He'd had every chance, with a good wife and a brilliant education, loving friends, enough prize money in his pocket to make a new film. Women were crazy about him. He had charm. Suddenly after ten years she was tired, she was exhausted. Worse, she was no longer curious. Sometimes he would carry on for a half hour, and hour, about a set, a change in location, a script he'd read. She would realize that she hadn't heard a word. She began to get absorbed in her own work. She went to graduate school, joined a theatre group, started doing yoga, bussed some Chicano kids to special programs. Before long none of her friends knew any of his friends. She had her own world. She didn't worry where he went, if he stayed out, or who he borrowed money from. For no accountable reason he suddenly began to fail. He failed at everything. He stayed home and put up curtains. She'd never liked curtains. "When I have a real home I'll put up curtains." He argued with everybody. Before he'd argued with everybody and they forgave, became fast friends, someone to air grievances with, to complain to. They were malcontents, but they were contemporary, they had a right. Now they stayed away. She didn't mind, they were her friends. But it meant she had to tend him, amuse him, serve him. He began to reel in. She was struggling.

Near the hedgerow she spotted mulberry trees. She remembered Baltimore in July. The Mulberry trees grew in the alleys, in thickets, on steep hillsides. They were lucky finds,

dangerous and delicious. Picking mulberries was about as much fun as baking potatoes in a pit on the backlot in Winchester Street. She remembered Louie Doyle stealing their iron gate. Dr. Van Fleet roses growing on every back fence. Roller-skating downhill on a dare. The Good-Humor Man selling popsicles. Suddenly she wanted to play. She turned Martin over. "Feel like some mulberries for breakfast?" "The first thing you ask every morning is what do you want to eat. You also like to discuss philosophy in the morning. Just let me wake up with a cup of coffee first." She propped a pillow behind his head and handed him a cup of coffee. "Madame Perreau sent up a pot this morning. The rolls are under the napkin." She changed into a halter and shorts while Martin watched her amusedly. So, he was friendly this morning. She relaxed. He always made her self-conscious about her legs. She posed awkwardly, pulling her buttocks in. It seemed her body had changed. When she poked her finger into her flesh it was puffed with water or air. She felt distorted with some nameless impiety. Her old dream. Martin didn't seem to notice the change, but then he loved big women, haunch and armpit, cavernous and wide. She was naturally thin, but lately she had spread out of shape, not with flesh, but like light bending in his magnetic field. Her thick short hair looked wispy, fuzzy. Her face appeared lopsided. No illusion. Stephie had noticed it too. "Sometimes you are not symmetrical, Beata. At first I thought it was my glasses, but I think you must be sleeping on one side." She rummaged through their luggage for the rubber-lined beach bag.

Martin had lit a cigarette and was reading her notes when she returned. He had never met Violet. She was before his time. He didn't like her. "Women's Lib," he snorted. "She wasn't a martyr; she was a selfish bitch." She let out her breath. "In this entire journal, she's blamed her mother, the Germans, even you for not answering her letters. Do you realize that she has never been seduced, not once. She set up every guy she slept with. As an experiment." Martin, she reflected silently, this is one woman you can't seduce because she is dead. Too dead for me to ask why. "She had a lot of physical courage. She broke her toes with piano wire so that she could take ballet lessons at twelve." She knew that would get him. He threw the book across the room. She never noticed that the clipboard had the word "War" engraved on it in crayon.

"Anyway, Georgia wants to publish them. She thinks they read like prose poems. Violet began them when she was eighteen. She may not be unblemished, but she was young. You may not like this, but there are female mavericks too, and they've always been around. They're not a cold war invention." Maybe that was the clue. She wasn't a contemporary. She was straight out of Attic tragedy, Clytemnestra, Medea. She scribbled a few notes on the top leaf and packed it in the bottom of her suitcase. She took out a gummed pad of notepaper and slipped it in her purse. She sat down, lit him a cigarette, and swung her legs up on the bed. He took a drag. "Martin, I've decided not to go back to graduate school. Not for a while. If we can just get through this summer, maybe I can write something of my own. Maybe even get pregnant." "Did Georgia suggest that?" he tested. "Well, she suggested that I send her what I write. But she does not recommend that I get pregnant." He laughed, "You know the most screwed up women."

Talking about babies amused him. Their child remained a principle, a target out of range. In its namelessness, sex had become an immaterial act. Her friends all called their children "accidents." She always conjured up the meaning of collision,

never error. Perhaps it was a strange kind of scarifying blessing. Maybe they didn't deserve it. They were in an Eden from which there was no escape, and it was the size of their bed wherever they were. He pulled her close and kissed her neck. She wanted to accomplish one lovely thing before he got angry, before they had to get back in the car where everybody would get hungry at a different time, and she would have to be a good sport. She caressed him. He had a scar on his left shoulder like a carbuncle. She could put her thumb in it. His body was finely muscled. You could never think of it as a painful body. He had been shot in the shoulder, breaking his collar bone. In the hospital they discovered the bone had been broken before. He told them. He had been hit by a car and tossed like a bullfighter. He was seven. He'd lifted weights for so long that his shoulders were almost even. He was proud of that scar. "Nobody I ever knew committed suicide. They committed murder, maybe. Come on, forget about justifying some weak-willed little nymphomaniac. Take somebody's case who's got guts, who challenged justice and stuck around for the verdict." Understanding this man was more than she had bargained for. When she married him she thought he was persecuted. Now she knew the persecutor. He didn't like the role of victim. He thought it feminine. Thousands maybe millions of people still believed that the *liebestod* was the height of the romantic. The love death turned them on. She despised Juliet, Desdemona, Phaedra, and Margaret suddenly, but she didn't want to despise Violet while she was trying to edit her. For all she knew it wasn't a love death.

He went into her and she tried to turn off her mind, her memory. He was always fresh, with all his smoking. He was clean and exceptionally neat. He stacked his books, papers, files. He smelled sweet and his clothes smelled sweet. She had never seen him in dirty clothes. Even when he had done stunt work. The only object that didn't disobey him was her body. He could produce a film but he couldn't shoot it or cut it. He couldn't install an air conditioner. Sometimes he tore his clothes when he couldn't get them off easily, but he never soiled them. The walls of the room parted. The sky reeled over head. Weeds grew between the tiles of the verandah. She was picking mulberries. She sang, "My heart is breaking over old bones, window-shaken house." Shank length grass bit her legs with soft green teeth, kittenish grass. Childrens' feet were thrashing through the grass like mowers over wheat and camomile. Branches danced in his hair, tickled his ears with low laughter. She tried to forget mileage, new francs, chattering of teeth in the background. Martin was holding the basket, eating as fast as she picked. Their hands turned purple. They were stained with blood. He pulled down the sleeve from her shoulder and kissed her breast. The tree swung like bells. The bees hummed. He lifted her with one hand on her breast. She grabbed him with her thighs. Thousands of white butterflies thickened the air with little flames. She lifted into his curve. His hair was flying, his face a shadow. They were shot like a banner from the magician's gun. It said "War!" The mulberries fell from her fingers like beads. She unclasped and cried a little, weak lavender tears. He was still talking to her. She couldn't hear the words but his voice was like the sound track heard from the lobby or the television from the other room. She always felt guilty responding to his words as incantations. They worked because they were repetitive not because they were lascivious and wanton. Consumed with desire, she wanted to be dissolved into unrefracted light, as electric and flickering as a blank screen. The truth was she only wanted to come. She also wanted realism afterwards. She was oh so nice a lady to

this mean man. He was a better lover she thought. He gave everything, then he took it away. He gave it to others. They broke it. He brought it to her to fix. It went on and on. She never once told him her fantasies, although she talked a blue streak if he demanded. She was entirely selfish in love and sex. She kept it to herself. She wasn't much interested in anyone else's secretseither, unless they shaped a purpose in their character, a self-consciousness. He made love with the spirit of democracy. In her heart she admired his honesty. He never censored or edited. And so she couldn't leave him just like that. It would be unamerican. He made love more than she did. She wanted to know for certain what it was; her own love and its meaning, to be smashed with it so that she could never mistake it again, to be an expert. She didn't believe him.

The heat was rising. Beata addressed letters all during lunch. Doc was trying to find St. Paul de Vence on the map. Martin was affable, pretending nothing had gone wrong. He explained Grayson to Doc, apologizing in advance for his theatricalism. He knew that if they were offended by him they would be outraged by Grayson. Beata thought: Be prepared for him to stage the death of his wife. She couldn't decide whether Grayson was a charlatan, a sorcerer, or a righteous man. He was a Jew, a wanderer, an outcast. He had antagonized every Jew he met in Florida. He was quite frankly despised. His stories were fabulous. Martin was talking: "He's been married four or five times. Doesn't have any children. He writes no fiction, only studies of pornography and erotic folklore. He had published more books and articles than the chairman of the English Department at Florida Institute. Some were legit. Editions of bawdy ballads. His chief sin was living up to the role of the lecher. He hungered after women. We've seen him at the theatre with several women on his arm, all beaming. He gave a party once for Alfred Deller and had the New York Pro Musica entertain. Just cheese and Scotch provided by the students. He never seemed to have any money and always had to hitchhike because he didn't have a car. The kids loved him. Claims he married his last wife because she never told a lie. She has been fighting cancer for the last four years. She asked Grayson for a divorce when she knew it was spreading. Cervical cancer must do strange things to the psychology of sex . . . Sex was sort of his business and she was losing hers. They removed everything." They all winced at the immaculate cruelty of his words, even if they were facts. "She told Grayson to go find himself another wife. He took the Florida job to pay her hospital bills." He must have asked every woman in Coral Gables to marry him, Beata remembered. He was only 49 or 50 but he looked blowsy and plump as an old lady. He snapped at you when he spoke. His blue eyes seared.

Beata met him first in the elevator at the Institute. He was constantly in motion. Professor Secord stood toward the back, staring and silent. Grayson was pushing buttons. She wore her butter colored corduroys. Grayson's jaw trembled. "I haven't seen you here before. Are you a student?" "Yes." "I see you're married," pointing to her ring. "What does your husband do?" She was surprised, throwing a glance at Professor Secord who seemed to ignore the man's boldness. She wondered if he were embarrassed. She was. Martin was staff and didn't get along with the faculty, thought they were bores. "He runs the audio-visual studio. Shows the campus films, Tape Lectures." "Following him around?" "Yes, I'm studying to be a wife," she laughed because she was giving false assurance to a false assumption. If she'd slapped him she couldn't have gotten a more startled attention. Second

never turned his head. Grayson jingled a bell in his label. "I have to wear this to scare off the undergraduates. Lechery is worse than leprosy. The department suggested it." Secord never smiled. Beata looked at the two of them. One brash and compulsive; the other asleep on his feet, indifferent. The doors opened. "My books are in the display case in the lobby. My new one just arrived today. 'I am not what I am,'" he quoted with a nod to Secord. Secord smiled at her. She stood watching the elevator doors close on them. Grayson was alive with the corruption of life, crawling with the maggots of decay and neurosis. Secord was as prim as a maiden. She interpreted his scant smile as an apology for Grayson's imprudence. Secord's lectures were great, dense

with poetry. Of all people she expected to radiate life, Secord would be the one. He was as unruffled as the Buckingham Palace guard. The doors closed on a pair of matched antitheses the seedy tailor with the wild mustache and the impeccable German banker. She felt she had been tricked by Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. Secord never spoke to her, even when he was the host at a party. Someone standing near him asked questions and offered to pour drinks. She picked up Grayson's book on erotic folklore. It was a work of pure scholarship, a bibliographic study of printed as compared to reported texts and their variants. Too tedious to be erotic. Secord, the Miltonist, was the lover of art. His prose was exalted with the Nietzschean life force. Later that year he committed suicide.

Diana Joyner



PLUNDERED LIGHT

Not there, but close
through the wooded camp,
damp underlife, crawling
October, it was dawning
twilight, tarnished silver,
and the bay musk blue.
We furrowed the dark together
until you turned to the clearing,
plundered light, the sky
left there for you.
The light was feathers
folded to your line.
Your shoulder tips.
Your cast thighs.

Darling, were you surprised
I stayed there, in the dark?
I led the way to the water.
I lay down. I swallowed the light.

Desiree Weidaw

POETRY READING [Stanley Kunitz]

Standing behind the podium
Looking past us with burnt out eyes
He reads
Like an ancient European rabbi announcing prayer and page
Preparing to ask us to rise

Suddenly his voice is fire
A love cry breaks the night science
A slap has burned for sixty-four years
And he spins a silken mask of past
Around his weighted body
A dying flame
Waxing
Waning low

Judy Marx

THE MAGDELEN

You think I am a Renaissance nun; well so I am
if that is what you want me to be.
Let me wear peach blossoms behind my ear
and rest my chin upon a mellow violin.
In a dark room lit by autumn's dying light,
let my big feet keep time beneath dark skirts,

and when I take off these robes at night
in a cell with a cross and bed and stool
and singing turn back the covers on the bed,
let me lie in fragrant silences
and define myself by straight white walls and darker wood
and season myself with bleached linen sheets.

And in the winter let me dream
the teeth of crocus are coming through the garden ground
and the apple branch beneath its sheath of ice
bears the first green shoots.
Let me keep a cat to keep me warm;
let me sing to it *va pure amore, va pure.*

But I have risen also in the middle of the night
and wrapped myself in shawl or sheet
or buttoned on a skirt though naked underneath
and striden forth these city streets
in search of squires, the younger sons of rising men
who idle in the darkest house, who stroll along the alley ways.

I have seen them pride themselves upon a hand of cards
and playfully pick out a fight.
I have seen them drink and drink
and have seen some sad to think of girls who got away.
I have held the fairest hand
looking for a single line of fate
and felt the fine and isolate mercury.

I have seen the set of that one's teeth
while this one watched with yellow eyes.
I have put my mouth upon the darkest throat
and laid my brow upon some fellow's breast
and in a jest I took a chance and touched
the bared love muscles of a child's arms.

And in the late night
I have brought the streets into my cloister here;
the taste of gloves upon my breath, their smell of beer.
The legs I settle down with in my bed
are scratched and dirty and often wet,
and it is a pleasure to dry them upon the sheets.
It is pleasant to be a nun and finally asleep.

And the dreams that I dream are lovely and deep.
I dream though-out the city the angelus ring
and the earth is warming and sweet.
The angels of Caravaggio have forsaken the sky
and weave through the alleys and search a way home.
Va pure amore, va pure.

Ruthellen Quillen

NEW YEAR

morning and she is dying,
the sun comes late now,
and I must go to see her
lying still.

like a puppy by the hearth,
she rests warm-faced
with morphine.
and even though
I wait for cooling,
it is good to see
the melted pain.

outside in the slush,
I know my camel coat
will tug me down.
it hangs like
Kit's advice
that there's no trouble
with an end.
Hush,
and it's
December 31st.

Jean Fitzgibbon

REVENGE

I have crushed a tiny crawler
with my finger tip.
I have smeared the minute
matter of an ant
with my foot.
I have done these things
and slept the night undisturbed.

One day
I flattened two hundred and twenty-seven termites
I counted
each life
each death

That night, every insect I had ever crushed
came in one body
in my room
on my bed
and settled it's black leather bottom
over my face.

Karen Hesse

GIFT

I have Prometheus bound
to a pillar in my cellar
my knives are finely honed
his agony is stellar

I ask him why and when
his only answer forms
in beads of sweat upon
his dark Titanic arms

He asks my why and why
and what is my desire
I laugh at him and spit upon
these ashes of the fire

Bill Lloyd

VILLANELLE

'The time is out of joint'

The walls tighten. Something is going to crack.
We are sitting by the window watching for the rain.
There's got to be some way to take up the slack.

One is feeling the pressure hot in her back.
Another in handcuffs is tapping the floor with his cane.
The walls tighten. Something is going to crack.

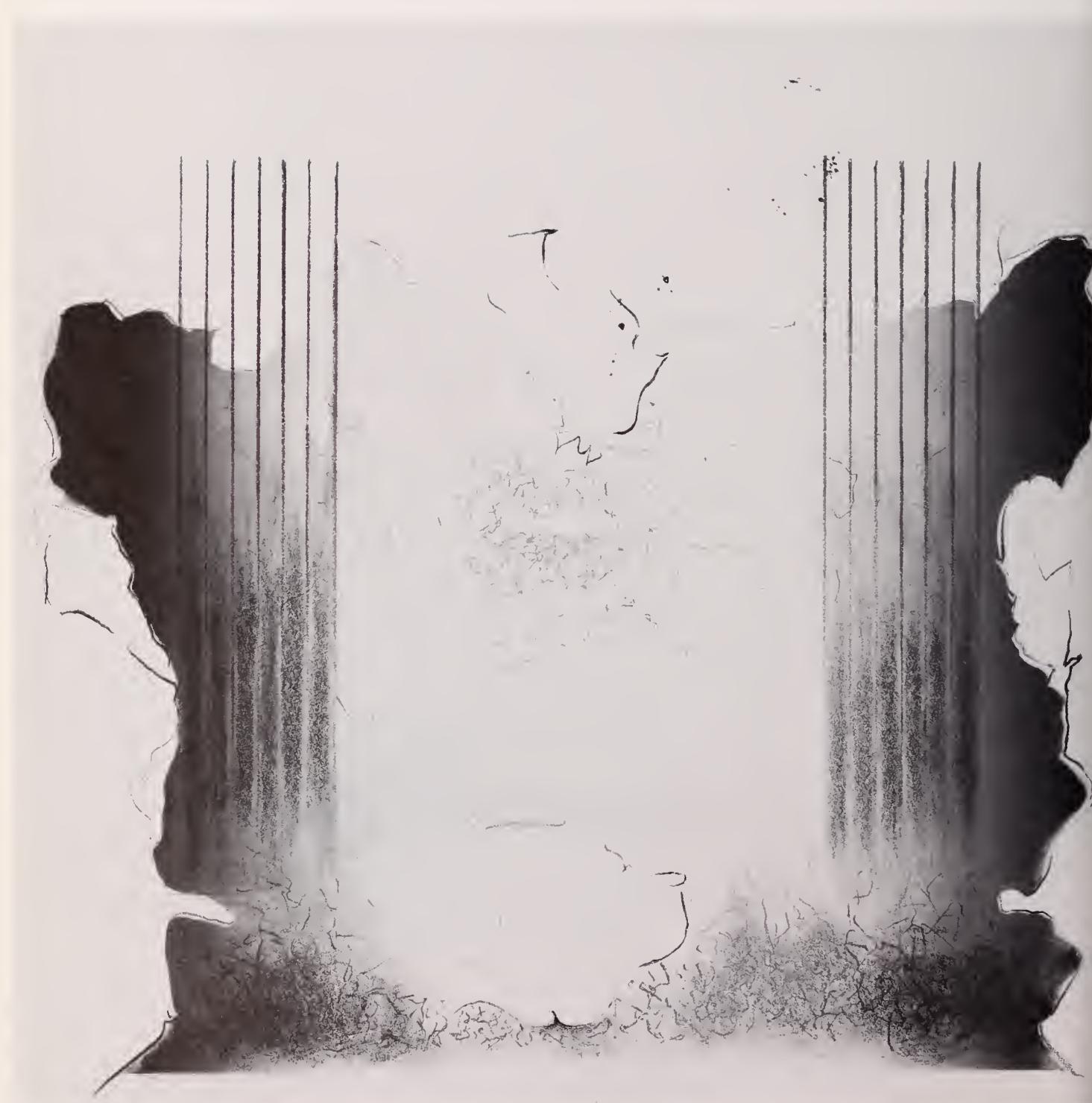
I bite the bread hard and hear my teeth clack.
I pass it on, silently cursing the grain.
There's got to be some way to take up the slack.

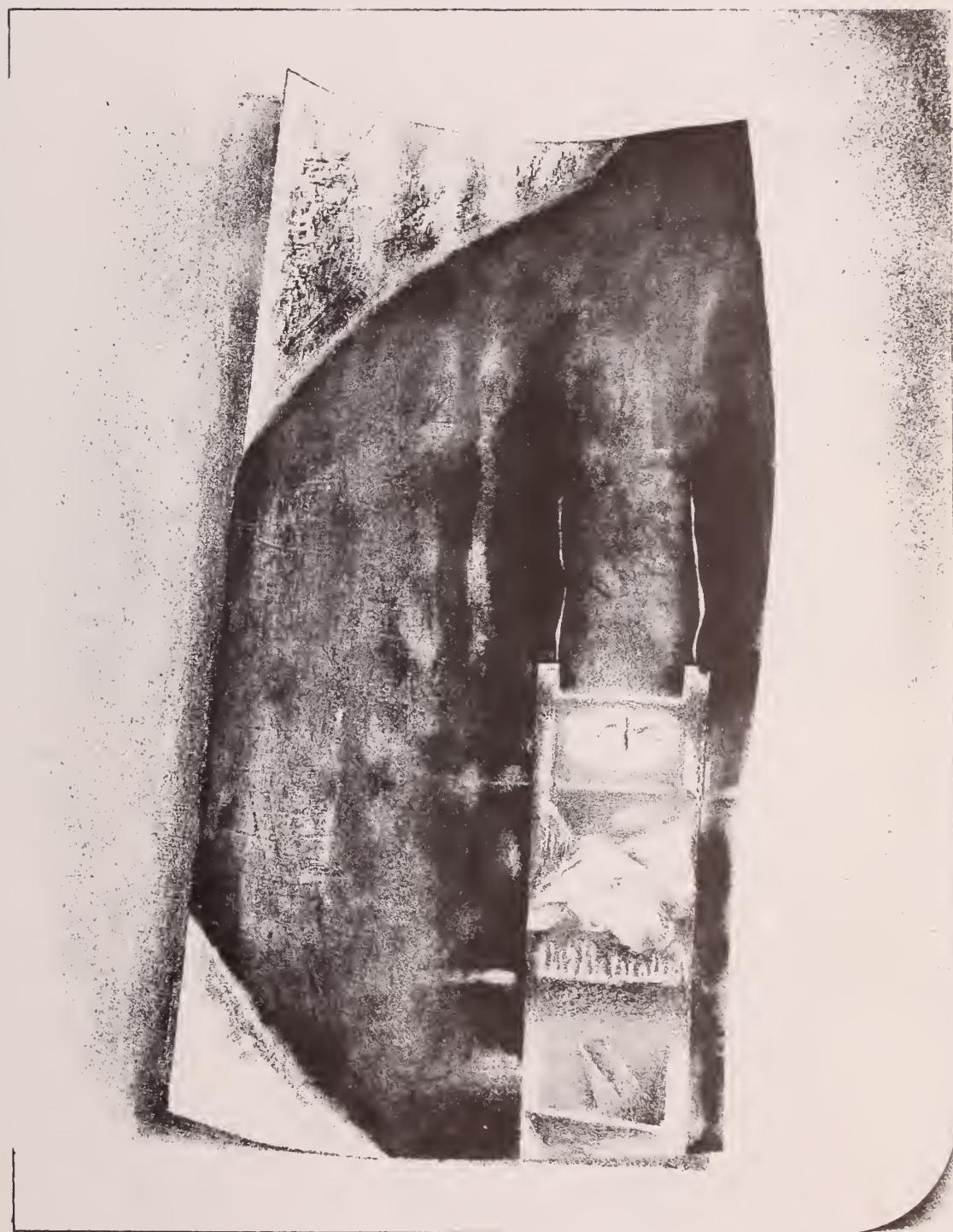
The wind is riding naked the sky bareback
turning the dooryard tree and the swaying
walls tighten. Something is going to crack

the floor, biting the table legs; tip the rack,
spilling the bric-a-brac knicknacks, I'm saying
there's got to be some way to take up the slack.

You that can carry, run, fetch the jack.
It happened last night, it's happening again.
The walls tighten. Something is going to crack.
There's got to be some way to take up the slack.

Bill Lloyd







LETTER TO HUGO FROM BALTIMORE

Dear Dick: This crazy Baltimore weather. It's winter here, grey wolf at forest's edge, at the edge of all forests. Sleep is not easy. Twenty thousand signs have bulldozed their way into my dreams, a low, mournful sound. It's just my train chugging the distance away. I get lost driving around as well, but it's different in a car. If the signs say thirty, I go forty, and stop to help a guy who's having engine trouble. He starts chanting, gives me a mantra for thanks. But Dick, "om" does not mean you're home. And I can't even believe myself now because yesterday I lied to thousands. Like last night in that little club when a woman came up and asked me how I got this scar on my forehead. I told her I fell off a barstool in Indiana. Isn't that what you would have said? Well, my tongue freezes and it gets colder. You know how it is, a poem calls, but I'm tired talking bones and it's just licking a dog's wound. I should close, so take care of the north country, another log on the fire, never mind that storm approaching from all sides. Hell, if the good die young, we'll live forever. Later, man. Tom.

S. Thomas Layesman

TERMINAL

your baby is dead, papa
the seeds are burned and
there are no bones left
to turn the bird to phoenix.
(but it would come in summer
we could get daffodils and
small chickens.)
my blanket is red—the wine dropped
in small stars, cutting my tongue.

the sun will take me now, cleansed
and leached, feet first
they have stirrups for the urging
between the knees—
the rocks chip and hurry down.
above the tunnel I am ready
to fly but for the falling of the sky.

in the darkening corridors, the silver
lined sheets urge me to dive or to die.
(we could give it pennies
and your eyes. teach it
whistling)

I awaken in darkest water
spewing blood and your children, papa.
small blades make me ready.

Mary Louise O'Connell

Poem Composed on the Occasion of a Reading by Stanley Kunitz

In Melanesia, aboriginal pygmies
Huddle in darkness around small flames.
The flametips lick the cold edges of their faces, and tie
their white eyes
To the fire.

Singing of aboriginal skin wrinkling on the bone,
His bony form bleached in white light,
An old man bends over his pages as if they were warm.
When he sings of cold strips of skin clinging to bones
As if they were warm, the eye
Is caught by the flash of his white tie.

Terence Hoagwood

A Small Tribute

Sister your hands
work so well, ordering
sugar and butter
and clay pots;
I have seen the motions,
every one a still shot
your fingers pressed out,
And on the violin
your hands always small
a cat licking itself,
or a bird
beaking its feathers.

Judy Kastner

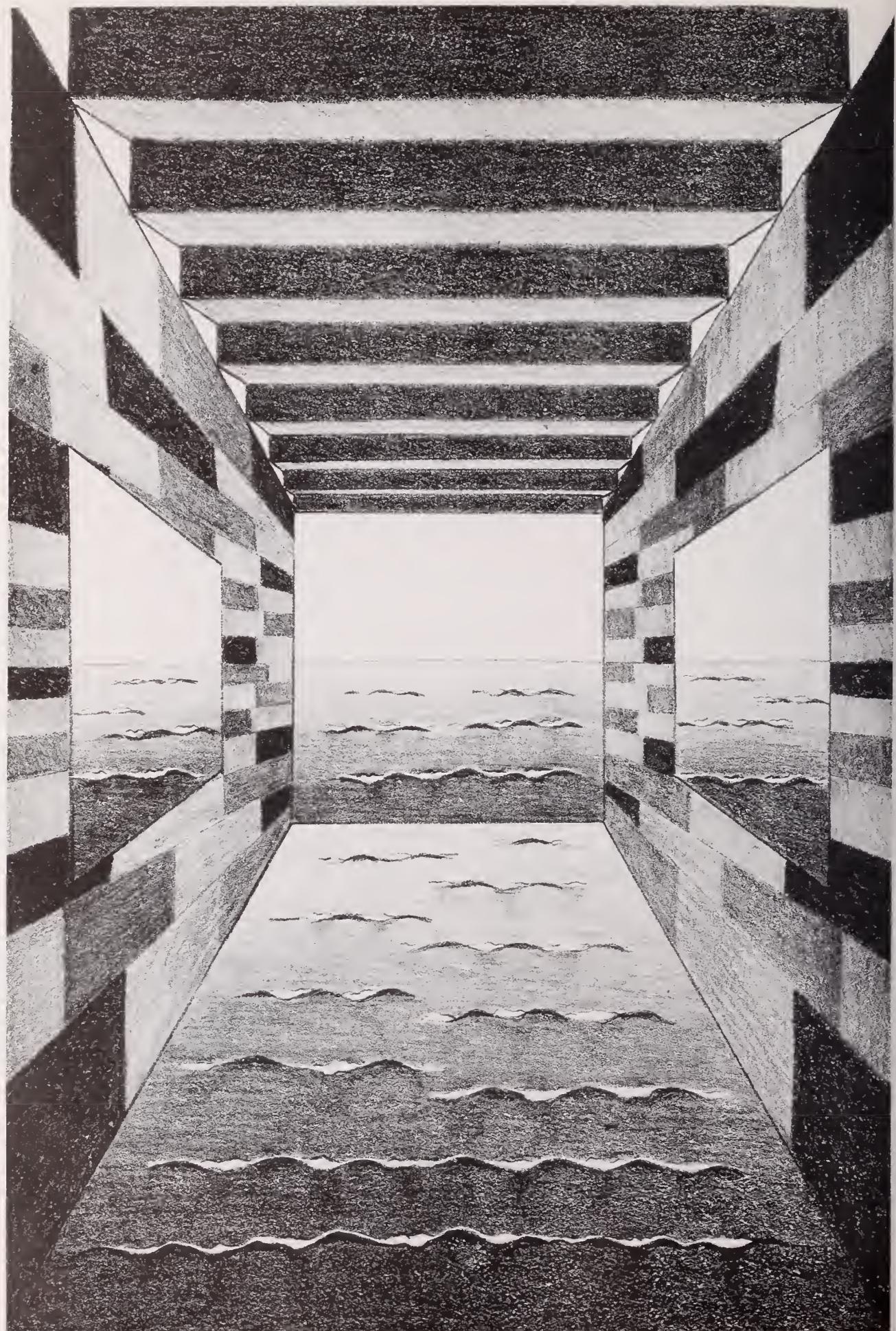
It is not exactly snow
this falling.

Their science does not
enamour me.
I have lived too long
in its shadow.
A bag of oranges
by the sleet storm light
the impossible spheres
defying weather
are as well brought
by dragons, snorting
crates and cases
leaden on their backs.

When I turn the switch
do I stir demons
who think the light?
My pencil's trail
graphite and plastic
could be a snake
frozen by my will.

In view of this
what is our hold
on the world?
We have grasped so carelessly
a black stick in the desert
straight and strong
to walk with
Now it comes alive
in our hands.

Jim Beall



TALIAFERRO HALL, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Blocking the corridor outside the office door
A blackboard stands, changed to a Dead Sea green.
Three placards, printed brilliant red, declare—
WET PAINT. The warning once being seen
The eye persists, notes under each, asprawl,
A real phonetic threat, saying DO NOT TUCH.
Shock beats along the English-teaching hall;
This spelling, academically, is just too much!

McLuhan, though his prose style stinks,
May make a point about the message.
Viewing print alone, the reader merely thinks
"I must not brush this object in the passage."
So the illiteracy becomes the Word of God--
Denying the curious finger its impulsive prod.

Ruthven Todd

THE INCANTATION

Night. No stars. Let hellgramites emerge
From the pale satin skull. Let lacewings cling
To the latticed cage of ribs while chigoes sing
Along the spine a spinal dirge.
Let gadflies or emmets dye the white pelvis black
As aphids outline all the limbs in green.
Scarabs, go rim the eyeballs till they look serene;
Sear all mortality away, spiders, with your poison-sac
And you, ephemerids, hand up a pall of cloud.
But let my love kneel down, denying I am dead
And, staring at these busy bones much comforted,
Reject the sycophantic shroud;
And let her say in accents only slightly strange
"Dear friend, I see no change, I see no change."

Carl Bode

Statue in a Field

She looms, nine feet tall
resting in grass.
I hold back
from reaching into her stomach,
from running my fingers along
orange wood grain.
I touch her only a second.

I want to take shavings
the artist scraped,
scatter them,
wood curls
whorl in wind.
His workshop holds
only a rake.

Around the shed, I find
tiny orange blossoms:
Jewel-weed.
Late in summer, the pods
are so ripe just wind can pop them.
My friend shows me where to touch.
Startled
the pod's insides shoot off.
The Jewel-weed is also called
Touch-me-not.

Adele Slaughter

CORDIAL

You wake
And your eyes, pitted
Olives are speared by light.
Your face still wears my fingerprints.

Last night's rain drips to dry
In mud,
And you tell me
That in your dream
You were a fountain
And you let me drink martinis
From your lion mouth:

Your throat, the gargoyle's
Now gargles
Raw with Chloraseptic. You drop the cup.

I have drained you. Last night
The empty rang round your rim.
I walk from you;
My heels grind glass.

Caryn E. Wiener



she could tell a story
to set a sunday right
eating purple plums 'til
her mouth turned blue

us kids would sit down front
of her rocker keep our hands
and feet out from under it 'cause
when the story got hold of her

she'd rock that chair clean off
the porch and we'd laugh
grownups never liked her much
said she was crazy but that woman

was the first poet i ever knew
just the way she'd slip
the seed out of a plum
with one slice of her tongue

Saundra Maley

EZRA POUND

you are an asian carpet and your mind the patterns
that swirl at a distance when i'm relaxed.
when i come into your room
you pulsate
surrounding my head in your mandalla.

you couldn't have kept track
of whose feet clodded on you
wearing a path from the door
to an only armchair
by the window

and i can see it; every year or so
you rearrange the furniture
covering the worn spots and cigarette burns
exposing some cleaner corners

never really cleaning
never completely covering holes
instead drawing curtains
hiding windows
leaving no dust to be seen
in streaks of sunlight.

Theo. Stone











